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Implementation of General Assembly resolutions 50/227, 52/12 B and 57/270 B
Economic and environmental questions
Social and human rights questions

The role of the Economic and Social Council in the integrated and coordinated implementation of the outcomes of and follow-up to major United Nations conferences and summits, in the light of General Assembly resolutions 50/227, 52/12 B and 57/270 B***

Report of the Secretary-General

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Summary

At the 2005 World Summit, world leaders committed themselves to the full and timely implementation of the internationally agreed development goals, recognizing that the Millennium Development Goals can be effectively achieved only if pursued in conjunction with the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits. By embracing a broad vision of development based on the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits, the gathering gave renewed political impetus to and deepened the significance of the integrated and coordinated follow-up of the conferences. The September Summit also provided the Economic and Social Council with two major new instrumentalities to advance this process: annual ministerial substantive reviews and development cooperation forums. To fully capitalize on the new opportunities, the Council and its subsidiary bodies would have to align their work with those new, expanded functions. The present report will identify measures that could be taken by the subsidiary bodies of the Council to strengthen their contribution to the integrated follow-up of major United Nations conferences and summits.

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I. Background

1. In paragraph 39 of its resolution 57/270 B, the General Assembly decided to include an item entitled "Integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic, social and related fields" in the annual agenda of the Assembly and invited the Secretary-General to submit a report on the question.

2. At its 2005 substantive session, the Economic and Social Council, in its resolution 2005/48, requested the Secretary-General to submit a report on the role of the Economic and Social Council in the implementation of General Assembly resolutions 50/227, 52/12 B and 57/270 B.

3. In its decision 2005/305, the Council also requested the Secretary-General to submit a consolidated report on the work of the functional commissions in 2006. The consolidated reports to the Council on the work of the functional commissions aim at assisting it in providing policy guidance to the commissions and harmonizing their work. In the past, they have highlighted the contribution of functional commissions to the implementation of a comprehensive framework for development originating from the Millennium Declaration and the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits.

4. The common thrust of those resolutions and decisions is to address and assess how the Council system, in particular the functional and regional commissions, work towards the implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits, and how the Council could further strengthen its contribution to the promotion of integrated and coordinated approaches to the implementation and follow-up processes. As such, they lend themselves to a joint treatment and have, for that reason, been made the subject of a single report. The report is also intended to serve as documentation for the General Assembly under the pertinent agenda item.

II. Integrated follow-up to conferences and summits and the 2005 World Summit

5. The major United Nations conferences and summits of the past 15 years have covered a broad spectrum of issues ranging from gender equality, social integration, health, employment, education, the environment and population to human rights, finance and governance. The outcomes of these conferences have generated a broad-based consensus on a shared vision of development. Each conference has focused on a particular aspect of development and has generated its own follow-up mechanism and constituency committed to advancing implementation of its outcome. At the same time, the international community has recognized that these conferences are closely interlinked. For example, improving literacy among mothers and enhancing access to safe drinking water and sanitation can contribute significantly to improving the rate of child survival, beyond just health interventions. Similarly, improving roads and making water more accessible so children, particularly girls, would not have to fetch water from distant sources, may increase school enrolment. The call for an integrated follow-up to conferences aims at addressing these interlinkages. Beyond the obvious intent of avoiding dispersal of efforts and duplication of work, the key objective of integrated follow-up is, first, to optimize

the impact of the various implementation processes by ensuring that they build on each other and are mutually reinforcing and, second, to promote the adoption of multisectoral approaches which take into account the interlinkages between different conference outcomes.

6. Since 1995, the Council has endeavoured to promote an integrated and coordinated approach to conference follow-up from a thematic perspective. The Assembly has also sought to further this process. In particular, Assembly resolutions 50/227 and 57/270 B provided a road map towards architectural coherence of the different follow-up mechanisms and recognized the need for all-encompassing development strategies that take into consideration the linkages between the conference outcomes. However, progress in these directions, both within the United Nations system and at the intergovernmental level, has been slow.

7. At the intergovernmental level, the General Assembly has been reviewing progress in the implementation of the Millennium Declaration, while the functional commissions and the Council have been conducting substantive reviews of the follow-up to individual conferences, as have the regional commissions in relation to the regional dimensions of those conferences. While efforts have been made by some of the functional commissions to cooperate with other commissions on overlapping aspects of their respective conference follow-up responsibilities, such cooperation is still far from systematic. Even more important, most Governments themselves continue by and large to adopt sectoral approaches to the implementation of conference and summit outcomes.

8. At the inter-agency level, the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB) has been at the forefront of the effort to bring about a more systematic integration of the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals, into the individual work programmes of various United Nations entities. Within its mandate, and with a main focus on the Millennium Development Goals themselves, the United Nations Development Group has also been making an important contribution to advancing coordination and integration in the system's implementation efforts at the country level.

9. At that level, the United Nations system has put in place several tools for developing coherent United Nations system-wide country strategies such as common country assessments, the United Nations Development Assistance Framework, the results matrix, thematic groups and joint programming. While these tools have been developed, the diffused structures of the system and the weak links that still prevail between normative and analytical work and operational activities within and across organizations place definite limitations on strategic and operational coherence across all areas covered by the international conferences.

10. Formulating cross-sectoral strategies to comprehensively address issues that are common to the United Nations conferences, and bringing the different follow-up mechanisms together in a coherent manner, remain key challenges for intergovernmental machinery, particularly the Council. While there are inbuilt structural obstacles to qualitatively enhancing system-wide coherence, United Nations organizations and agencies have shown both a determination and a capacity to respond to a compelling policy framework established at the intergovernmental level. The adoption by the Millennium Summit of a set of ambitious, but achievable time-bound quantitative targets, which were later collated into the Millennium Development Goals, marked an important step in that direction. The system's

response has included an important shift from a focus on inputs to a results orientation, accompanied by a strengthening of its monitoring capacities through the development of a set of indicators for measuring progress. On that basis, the Secretary-General has been reporting on progress towards the Millennium Development Goals to the General Assembly each year.

11. After the Millennium Summit it became apparent that the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals required an integrated effort to pursue the broader internationally agreed development goals that have emanated from the major United Nations conferences and summits. It also became clear that, while the Millennium Development Goals provide a compelling platform to address the needs of the world's poorest, they do not in themselves encompass all of the issues covered by the conferences that make for durable, comprehensive economic and social progress and sustainable development (see A/59/2005).

12. At the 2005 World Summit, world leaders committed themselves to the timely and full realization of not only the Millennium Development Goals but also all of the development goals and objectives agreed at the major United Nations conferences and summits. The Summit recognized the crucial role played by those conferences and summits in shaping a comprehensive vision to address development challenges in all their dimensions: the needs of the world's poorest, but also the needs of middle-income developing countries; the question of growing inequality; and different dimensions of human development and good governance that are closely related to economic and social progress. The conferences also addressed issues which need long-term approaches such as increasing divergences in development experiences; the differential impact of globalization; the need for policy space; increased transparency; and greater participation and voice for the developing world in the formulation of global economic policies, as well as linkages between lack of development and conflict (see E/2005/56).

13. By endorsing a broad vision of development, the Summit placed the Millennium Development Goals within the comprehensive agenda of the internationally agreed development goals. That has given renewed political and substantive significance to the integrated follow-up of conferences. It has also pointed to the urgent need for a comprehensive review process which would give a full picture of overall progress in implementing the internationally agreed development goal agenda and allow for the formulation of multifaceted policies that effectively cover interlinkages between the different conference goals. Making such a process manageable, from both a policy and a substantive point of view, requires in turn that core issues which figure prominently across conferences be meaningfully identified. That would imply taking the Millennium Development Goals, the Millennium Declaration and the internationally agreed development goals as reference points and setting in motion a process that would enable the international community to focus on a number of cross-sectoral areas, illustrated in the box below, which would capture critical issues for action emphasized in the outcomes of the conferences and summits and would serve to develop an integrated policy framework for action at the national and international levels. It also implies the need to structure comprehensive but focused arrangements for reviewing and assessing progress and guiding further action required to accelerate and deepen such progress.

Critical issues for action repeatedly emphasized in the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic, social and related fields

Core challenges

- Eradicating poverty, hunger and malnutrition
- Advancing education and literacy
- Providing health services, preventing disease and reducing mortality
- Advancing gender equality and empowering women
- Promoting employment
- Achieving social integration and addressing vulnerabilities of social groups
- Ensuring environmental sustainability and managing the natural resource base for development
- Promoting democracy, good governance and human rights
- Addressing challenges of countries with special needs

Key instruments

- Strengthening the global partnership for development
- Making macroeconomic policies work for sustained employment-generating economic growth
- Promoting science and technology for development
- Enhancing the role of civil society and the private sector for development

14. Not only did the World Summit send a strong message that there is a continued need to promote an integrated and coordinated follow-up to the major United Nations conferences and summits (see General Assembly resolution 60/1, paras. 17 and 18) but it also envisaged concrete measures to strengthen the role of the Council as a principal body for coordination, policy review and policy dialogue in the implementation of the internationally agreed development goals (para. 153). First, it entrusted the Council with holding annual ministerial substantive reviews of progress in the implementation in the internationally agreed development goals. Second, it mandated the Council to hold a biennial development cooperation forum to review trends in international development cooperation, including strategies, policies and financing. At the same time, countries committed themselves to preparing and starting to implement comprehensive national development strategies, by 2006, aimed at meeting the internationally agreed development goals. Those three sets of measures provide key opportunities for the international community to overcome some of the main weaknesses of current follow-up and implementation processes, as outlined above.

15. The annual ministerial reviews can provide a common platform to bring together, harmonize, consolidate and build upon the assessments of progress emanating from existing conference review processes conducted by the Council and the functional commissions. By systematically drawing upon regional and country-level assessments, the reviews can also serve to effectively bridge the gap between the normative and operational work of the United Nations system — a gap that remains a major obstacle to effective implementation, as recognized in the 2005 World Summit Outcome itself. Comprehensive reviews carried out along those lines, with a focus each year on one of the cross-sectoral policy areas common to the United Nations conferences and summits, could serve as a powerful vehicle to overcome the compartmentalization of conference reviews. That, in turn, would allow the Council to make a distinctive contribution to the formulation of comprehensive, multifaceted strategies that address the interlinkages between the different conferences and summits.

16. The high-level biennial development cooperation forums, which are to review trends in international development cooperation, including strategies, policies and financing, can equally contribute to the integrated and coordinated follow-up to conferences in several major ways. With its convening power, the Council can provide an inclusive, broad-based forum where key policymakers from both developed and developing countries, relevant development institutions — United Nations system organizations, the Bretton Woods institutions and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development — and civil society and private sector participants are brought together and new ideas are, as a result, generated concerning the national and international environment most conducive to maximizing the effectiveness and impact of development cooperation in the achievement of the internationally agreed development goals. By elaborating priorities and policy orientations for the implementation of the internationally agreed development goals, the development cooperation forums, along with such goals, can be a major source of policy inputs to guide and support the effort to achieve greater coherence and mutual enhancement between the normative and analytical and operational activities of the United Nations system.

17. With regard to the country level, the call by world leaders upon countries to prepare and start to implement comprehensive national development strategies to achieve the internationally agreed development goals has given new impetus to reforms of United Nations operational activities. This implies that the system must make renewed efforts to align its activities with national development strategies that can serve as a catalyst for further progress in the reform of operational activities and in achieving a more unified United Nations system presence. The High-level Panel on United Nations System-wide Coherence in the Areas of Development, Humanitarian Assistance and the Environment that the Secretary-General has established in response to the 2005 World Summit is expected to make proposals and recommendations that can serve to significantly strengthen the ongoing efforts of the system in that regard.

III. Strengthening the role of the Economic and Social Council and its subsidiary machinery in the implementation of General Assembly resolutions 50/227, 52/12 B and 57/270 B

A. Strengthening the role of the Economic and Social Council

1. Coordination and review function

18. The Council, as the principal United Nations body for promoting economic and social development, has a broad range of Charter-mandated functions encompassing coordination and consensus-building and policy dialogue and review. It is the only United Nations organ explicitly mandated to coordinate the activities of the specialized agencies and to consult with non-governmental organizations and it has, under its purview, an extensive network of functional and regional commissions.

19. The new functions assigned to the Council enable it and its subsidiary bodies to serve as a more unified system at the global and regional levels to guide and support the implementation of the internationally agreed development goal agenda. In addition to the key substantive contribution that they could make to further progress towards the internationally agreed development goals, annual ministerial reviews can be instrumental in overcoming the disparate nature of the present review processes and provide a common framework for the assessment of overall progress. The value added of such reviews is that, owing to their ministerial participation, they can authoritatively identify implementation deficiencies at the global, regional and national levels and their linkages, and help the international community visibly to keep under scrutiny and fine-tune policies in support of the agreed development goals.

20. The reviews will need to be prepared through a collaborative process that should fully engage actors from within as well as outside the United Nations system. Experience from existing global, regional and national reviews will need to be fully drawn upon. The functional commissions and regional commissions should contribute national and regional knowledge and analysis.

21. In order to achieve the full required mobilization of inputs and expertise, there must be a degree of predictability in the themes to be considered by the reviews. Also, it would be extremely useful for the Council to agree to adopt a multi-year work programme for the reviews. One possibility would be for the Council, each year, to focus on one of the key issues common to the outcome of major United Nations conferences and summits, in a way that would ensure that over time the whole internationally agreed development goal agenda would be covered by the reviews. That could be accompanied by broad but comprehensive statistical analyses covering the broad spectrum of the internationally agreed development goals and updated each year, along the lines of the statistical annexes that have accompanied the Secretary-General's annual reports to the General Assembly on the follow-up to the Millennium Summit.

Recommendations

22. **The Council should seek to ensure that individual follow-up processes are geared to contributing to and facilitating a coherent, unified implementation of**

the internationally agreed development goal agenda — not only in relation to reporting, but also analytically and in terms of policy relevance.

23. **The Council may consider adopting, as soon as possible, a multi-year programme of work for its annual ministerial reviews, taking into consideration the core policy issues of conferences and drawing on the experience of the multi-year programmes already adopted by some of the functional commissions.**

24. **Other arrangements made by the Council in relation to its annual ministerial reviews should be geared to enabling it to keep under constant review and comprehensively monitor and evaluate progress in the implementation of the agenda related to the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals, and to develop multifaceted strategies that effectively promote mutual reinforcement in the actions being taken in the pursuit of those goals.**

2. Ensuring thematic unity

25. A clear message of General Assembly resolution 57/270 B has been the importance of centring the Council's annual sessions around one broad issue or subject. In recent years, the themes of the high-level segment, notably its focus on the internationally agreed development goals, have provided a link among the different segments and across the particular themes to which they were devoted. To see to it that thematic coherence is advanced, it is important to ensure that the new annual ministerial reviews and the development cooperation forums are fully integrated into the substantive sessions of the Council. Guidance provided by ministers should be followed up during the coordination and operational activities segments. One practical possibility in relation to the latter segments would be to focus the dialogue with executive heads of United Nations funds and programmes held during these segments on addressing the operational implications of the key policy issues and recommendations emerging from the development cooperation forums.

26. In its resolution 57/270 B, the General Assembly requested the Council to establish, no later than 2004, a multi-year work programme for the coordination segment of its substantive session, based on a focused and balanced list of cross-sectoral thematic issues common to the outcomes of major United Nations conferences and summits. The Council has made only limited progress so far. As the final decision on such a programme is linked to the outcome of the ongoing Assembly deliberations on the implementation of the 2005 World Summit Outcome, the Council has deferred relevant consultations until the conclusion of the Assembly consultations. The Council is expected to resume its consideration of the issue, taking into account the need for related multi-year work programmes for both the coordination segment and the annual ministerial reviews. Such an approach should respect the individuality of each segment and function.

Recommendations

27. **The Council may wish to devote a significant part of its substantive session, particularly parts of its coordination and operational activities segments, to the follow-up of the annual ministerial reviews and the development cooperation forums.**

28. **To maintain thematic coherence, the Council may wish to adopt closely related multi-year work programmes for the annual ministerial review and the coordination segment, while keeping the separate identity of the segments.**

3. The reporting framework

29. Improving the Council's reporting framework is another important element of the effort to strengthen its policy-setting and coordination functions. Both the functional and regional commissions of the Council have a major contribution to make in that regard. A central function of the Council is to integrate the substantive analyses carried out by those bodies into comprehensive and coherent policy frameworks. Reporting by the subsidiary bodies, regional commissions and related bodies to the Council should provide it with analyses and policy inputs that bear directly on the coordinated and integrated follow-up to the outcomes of the conferences and summits and are relevant to policy guidance, national development strategy formulation and evaluation and international cooperation to advance the internationally agreed development goals.

30. To enhance the policy contribution of the Council to the work of the General Assembly, it should seek to consolidate not only its own policy recommendations but also relevant substantive inputs of the subsidiary bodies for the attention of the Assembly. To this end, the current, largely procedural Council report to the General Assembly should be redesigned and include an analytical part, adjusted to the structure and thrust of the Assembly's sessions to which they are addressed, so as to enable the Assembly to systematically build on the Council's own work.

Recommendations

31. **The Council may wish to request its subsidiary bodies to include in their reports analyses and policy contributions, as well as a substantive summary of their deliberations on issues relevant to the Council's work in advancing the internationally agreed development goals. In such reports they should identify obstacles and challenges and opportunities, with particular attention to lessons learned and best practices.**

32. **In its annual reports to the General Assembly, the Council should consolidate and analyse relevant substantive inputs of its subsidiary bodies and make them available to the Assembly.**

B. Role of the functional commissions

1. In the integrated follow-up to conferences

33. Over the past 15 years, the functional commissions of the Economic and Social Council have been key instruments in shaping a consensus on a broad development vision based on the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits, particularly by acting as preparatory committees for the international conferences and by further pursuing their follow-up. The commissions have a considerable impact in their individual policy areas and have been instrumental in maintaining the focus on the implementation of the outcomes of the different conferences coming within their respective purviews. In 2006, the functional commissions again contributed a wealth of analysis directly relevant to the

international community's understanding of the policies and actions required to make further progress towards the goals contained in the Millennium Declaration and the outcomes of conferences. Their substantive contributions are summarized in a conference room paper which complements the present report.

34. Although the functional commissions are playing crucial roles in relation to the follow-up to conferences, progress in ensuring that such processes are appropriately linked remains insufficient. Cooperation among the functional commissions remains somewhat limited and largely ad hoc. Both the General Assembly and the Council have repeatedly called for stronger interactions among the bodies, and for more focused inputs from them for the Council's deliberations, in ways that would contribute to a more integrated treatment of issues and help ensure that follow-up processes and their policy prescription support and reinforce each other.

35. The broad development agenda and the new instrumentalities envisaged by the Summit to review and promote progress in meeting that agenda, particularly the annual ministerial reviews endorsed by the 2005 World Summit, create new opportunities for significant advances in those directions. They provide a new substantive basis and a new sense of purpose for the Council's review of the work of its functional commissions and its efforts to clarify responsibilities, address gaps and promote mutually reinforcing deliberations among the commissions. The alignment of the work programmes and priorities of the functional commissions with the core policy areas contained in the internationally agreed development goal agenda should proceed in a systematic and balanced way that does not undermine the specificity of the different conference outcomes. Further, it should result in reinforcing both overall progress and progress in advancing specific goals of individual conferences.

Recommendations

36. **The Council should encourage its functional commissions to review their substantive priorities and opportunities in the light of the 2005 World Summit Outcome and to reflect on the opportunities that the Outcome offers for progress in areas falling within their mandate.**

37. **To strengthen their interactions with the Economic and Social Council, the functional commissions should be requested to add a standing agenda item on their contributions to the new functions of the Council.**

38. **The Council should request the functional commissions that work on conference follow-up processes to devote part of their deliberations to an analysis of the obstacles and challenges, as well as lessons learned and examples of best practices that should be taken into account from the commissions' own perspective, in advancing progress in relation to the different themes to be pursued by the annual ministerial reviews.**

2. Working methods

39. In its resolution 57/270 B, the General Assembly requested each functional commission to examine its methods of work and to report to the Council no later than 2005 on the outcome of their examinations. At its 2005 substantive session, the Council welcomed the progress made in the review of the working methods of

several functional commissions and invited those functional commissions and other relevant subsidiary bodies that had not yet done so to continue to examine their methods of work and to submit their reports to the Council in 2006. A detailed overview of the review of methods of work of the functional commissions is provided in the conference room paper that accompanies the present report.

Recommendation

40. **The Council may wish to request those functional commissions and other subsidiary bodies that have not yet done so to conclude their review of the methods of work before its 2007 substantive session.**

3. Cooperation between the Council and the functional commissions

41. In the past decade, coinciding with the increasing attention that the Council has devoted to the coordinated follow-up of conferences, certain tools and practices have been introduced to intensify the interaction and exchange of information between the functional commissions and the Council. Such tools include the consolidated reports on the work of the functional commissions, joint bureau meetings, annual meetings with the chairpersons of the functional commissions and advance consultations to review the reports of the functional commissions. While vertical coordination remains somewhat limited, the aforementioned measures have served to increase awareness among the functional commissions of the Council's and each other's work and to strengthen the Council's interest in providing policy guidance for the activities of the commissions and in benefiting more substantively from their inputs in its strategic work.

Recommendation

42. **The Council and the functional commissions should, together, continue to develop more effective two-way communication. That should include an assessment of the effectiveness of current tools focusing, beyond process issues, on strategic policy concerns, in particular the joint bureau meetings.**

C. Role of the regional commissions

43. The 2005 World Summit has highlighted significant regional divergences in progress towards the achievement of the United Nations development agenda. A good understanding of specific regional characteristics and challenges in meeting the development goals is thus a matter of priority. In response to their mandates relating to the follow-up to the major global conferences, the regional commissions have systematically strengthened their cooperation with the Council. This is serving to bring a regional perspective into the work of the Council and to reinforce the links between global and regional follow-up processes.

44. In exercising their responsibilities for the follow-up to the global United Nations conferences at the regional level, the regional commissions have collaborated closely with relevant regional and subregional organizations. That kind of partnership should continue to be actively promoted. For example, in preparing for the 2005 World Summit, all regional commissions enlisted the support not only of the United Nations Development Programme, but also of regional institutional actors including, among others, the regional development banks, to prepare regional

reviews of the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals. Similar efforts should continue in the context of the annual ministerial reviews.

45. Cooperation has also been further strengthened among the commissions. An illustration is the collaboration between the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific and the Economic Commission for Europe, notably in providing technical assistance to countries in Central Asia and the South Caucasus. That cooperation was within the framework of the United Nations-led Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia, which was jointly formulated by the two regional commissions on the initiative of the Secretary-General.

46. Progress has also been made in strengthening cooperation between the functional and the regional commissions. In 2006, the Commission on the Status of Women and the United Nations Forum on Forests significantly stepped up their links to the regional commissions. However, the potential contribution of the regional commissions and processes to the integrated follow-up to conferences at the global level has yet to be fully exploited. Further details on the linkages between the regional and the functional commissions are provided in the conference room paper which complements the present report.

47. The Council's capacity to build on the work of its regional commissions is an important condition for effectively conducting the annual ministerial reviews. Given different prevailing situations and requirements, there are large divergences between different regions of the world. Regional dimensions must be taken into consideration when discussing trends in and the policies that should guide development cooperation. The regional commissions should therefore be called upon and given the ability to contribute effectively to the biennial development cooperation forums including, possibly, by holding regional preparatory events.

48. The Council's work to assess and promote progress in the attainment of the internationally agreed development goals in countries as they move from crisis situations to rehabilitation and long-term development would also greatly benefit from the broad-based experience of the relevant regional commissions.

Recommendations

49. **The Council may wish to stress the role of the regional commissions as regional focal points for the annual ministerial reviews, bearing in mind regional priorities. It may wish to encourage regional commissions to further strengthen their capacity to effectively fulfil that role.**

50. **The Council may wish to request the regional commissions to contribute to the annual ministerial reviews by, inter alia, undertaking regional reviews of the implementation of the internationally agreed development goals and reporting thereon to the Council, with a focus on challenges and obstacles as well as lessons learned and the identification of best practices.**

51. **The Council could request the regional commissions to contribute to the biennial development cooperation forums, inter alia, by holding regional preparatory meetings.**

52. **The Council may wish to encourage the continuation and strengthening of cooperation among the regional commissions and between regional**

commissions and other regional actors, and suggest that such cooperation focus on the core policy issues of the major United Nations conferences and summits.

53. **In the area of post-conflict reconstruction and development, the Council may wish to also draw on the broad-based experience of the regional commissions, particularly in the exercise of its responsibilities to assess and promote progress in the attainment of the internationally agreed development goals in post-conflict countries and other countries in special situations.**

D. Role of the Committee for Development Policy

54. Over the years, the Committee for Development Policy, a subsidiary expert body of the Economic and Social Council, has contributed through its inputs to a better appreciation by the Council of policies conducive to economic and social progress, including in relation to the follow-up to conferences and summits. The Committee could be requested to contribute directly to the annual ministerial reviews and the development cooperation forums by providing analyses of experiences at the national, regional and global levels and of their relevance to the attainment of the internationally agreed development goals.

Recommendation

55. **The Council might want to consider how best to draw upon the expertise of its expert committees to prepare the annual ministerial reviews and the development cooperation forums, and in particular to invite the Committee for Development Policy to provide timely advice on concrete actions that can maximize progress in the attainment of the internationally agreed development goals.**

IV. Role of the United Nations system

56. There are two major reasons why a United Nations system-wide approach to the pursuit of the internationally agreed development goal agenda is urgent. First, there is a need to provide system-wide support for the implementation of the 2005 World Summit Outcome, particularly as it relates to the adoption and implementation by all countries of comprehensive national development strategies to achieve the internationally agreed development goals and objectives, including the Millennium Development Goals, and to the new mandates assigned to the Council. Second, these initiatives will require common frames of reference and harmonized monitoring and measurement mechanisms that the United Nations system is uniquely suited to develop and support.

A. Strengthening implementation at the inter-agency level

57. The organizations of the United Nations system have made significant progress in integrating the internationally agreed development goals in their programmes of work and in developing system-wide approaches to ensure coherent follow-up to the 2005 World Summit. CEB and the United Nations Development Group, with its 2006-2008 action plan on the follow-up to the 2005 World Summit,

have been at the forefront of that effort. The absence of a comprehensive and integrated system for monitoring progress across the internationally agreed development goal agenda and the diversity of the system's organizational and funding structure have tended to limit the ability of United Nations organizations and agencies to develop, as yet, fully coordinated and coherent programmes and operations in pursuit of the internationally agreed development goals.

58. The Millennium Declaration and now the 2005 World Summit Outcome have highlighted the need for strengthening policy coherence across the United Nations system. Policy coherence, and the prioritization in work programmes that it implies, necessarily requires the engagement of the intergovernmental governing bodies. Within the United Nations itself it necessitates closer links between the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and its functional and regional commissions and the governing boards of the United Nations funds and programmes to promote consistency in policy approaches and coordination in the work programmes of such bodies.

59. Further, the Council's dialogue with the wider United Nations system, particularly in the context of the new functions entrusted to it by the 2005 World Summit, cannot be confined exclusively to the secretariats of the system, but should increasingly extend to the intergovernmental organs that set the policies of the system's agencies. Ways to open a direct dialogue between the Council and the presiding officers of the agencies' governing organs should be given some focused attention in the period ahead, as an integral part of the Council's ongoing review of its methods of work. The experience gained in engaging in an intergovernmental dialogue with the Bretton Woods institutions, the World Trade Organization and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) through the annual special high-level meetings of the Council focusing on the International Conference on Financing for Development, held in Monterrey, Mexico, may provide some useful guidance in that regard.

1. United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination

60. Since the Millennium Summit, CEB has been actively engaged in steering the work of the system so as to maximize its collective contribution to advancing the goals of the Millennium Declaration. Since its issuance, the Secretary-General's road map report on the follow-up to the Summit (A/56/326) has provided the basic framework for the work programme and agenda of CEB and the supporting work of its high-level committees.

61. A CEB publication entitled "One United Nations — catalyst for progress and change", issued in 2005 and commended by the President of the Council to the 2005 World Summit, highlights the major impact that the common policy guidance provided by the Millennium Declaration has had on the overall coherence and effectiveness of the system's work. The publication contains a comprehensive assessment of the system's response to the Declaration and sets forth some basic commitments as to the way in which the organizations of the system intend to work together in the period ahead to further advance the Declaration's goals.

62. Since then, CEB has sought to act on the implications for the work of the system of the 2005 World Summit Outcome. Executive heads have welcomed the renewed political impetus that the Summit Outcome document has lent to the drive to meet the internationally agreed development goals and to the system's own

reform efforts towards enhanced coherence and impact in supporting progress in the attainment of these goals. They have also committed themselves to extending their full support for the effective exercise by the Council of the new roles that have been assigned to it for the undertaking of annual ministerial reviews of progress and to harness development cooperation with a view to the internationally agreed development goals, as crucial elements to guide and reinforce the implementation process.

63. In addressing modalities for undertaking the annual ministerial reviews and for the functioning of the development cooperation forums, the Council may wish to consider how best to utilize and build on CEB support in relation to both the preparations for these processes and their follow-up. Bearing in mind the impact that the Secretary-General's road map for the follow-up to the Millennium Declaration has had in framing CEB work during the past five years, it may be expected that the proposed adoption by the Council of a multi-year work programme for its annual ministerial review would greatly facilitate the ability of CEB to mobilize the support of the system in a systematic, in-depth way.

64. As progress is made in linking the annual ministerial reviews and the development cooperation forums not only with the high-level, but also with the coordination segments, the interest in strengthening and raising the level of agencies' contributions to the coordination segment acquires renewed relevance. Relevant proposals put forward in the past may be profitably reviewed. They include a proposal to consider the annual reports of CEB at the coordination segment rather than at the general segment, as is presently the case, and a proposal to invite groups of executive heads, selected in the light of the theme of the segment, to interact with the Council during its coordination segment, so that, over a period of time, all members of CEB would have engaged in a dialogue with the Council.

2. Executive Committee on Economic and Social Affairs

65. The Executive Committee on Economic and Social Affairs is uniquely positioned to support the enhanced role of the Council, by drawing on the multisectoral capacities of its membership. It works through 11 thematic clusters, bringing together programme managers in all key areas of common concern. In 2006, Executive Committee entities developed a set of common priorities to guide the economic and social sectors of the United Nations in its follow-up to the 2005 World Summit. The Committee is thus well placed to provide the hub for integrated support for the work of the Council and its subsidiary bodies in conducting a unified review of the implementation of the internationally agreed development goal agenda. To carry forward the common priorities for action identified by the Committee, it is working to build stronger strategic cooperation among its members and to improve the sharing of tasks among its entities. The Committee intends to work more closely with the United Nations Development Group to respond to the Summit's call to further strengthen the link between normative and operational work.

Recommendation

66. **The Council may wish to consider how best to utilize and build upon CEB and Executive Committee on Economic and Social Affairs support in relation to**

both the preparations for the annual ministerial reviews and the development cooperation forums and their follow-up.

3. Bretton Woods institutions, the World Trade Organization and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development

67. The annual special high-level meetings of the Council with the Bretton Woods institutions, the World Trade Organization and UNCTAD have been considered useful by policymakers, particularly for deepening the dialogue between the United Nations and the Bretton Woods institutions, and for strengthening partnerships for the achievement of the internationally agreed development goals in the areas of finance for development, debt relief and trade. As it gears up to undertake the annual ministerial reviews and the development cooperation forums, the Council's dialogue with the international financial and trade institutions will need to be further strengthened. The President of the Council has expressed his intention to explore ways and means of doing so. A continuing policy dialogue between ministers of finance and trade, on the one hand, and ministers of development cooperation, economic and foreign affairs, on the other, is crucial to advancing progress towards the internationally agreed development goals.

Recommendations

68. **Modalities to further interaction between the Council and the Bretton Woods institutions, the World Trade Organization and UNCTAD at the intergovernmental level should be actively explored, drawing on the experience of the Council's meeting with these institutions in the first half of 2006.**

69. **The Council may wish to explore ways in which the special high-level meetings could contribute to the effective implementation of its new functions, notably the annual ministerial reviews and the development cooperation forums, and to the initiation of consultations with all relevant stakeholders.**

B. Strengthening implementation at the country level

70. Over the past few years, the support of the United Nations development system for integrated conference follow-up at the country level has been progressively strengthened. A number of tools, such as the common country assessments, the United Nations Development Assistance Framework, the results matrix, thematic groups and joint programmes, have been developed and, as they evolve, their effectiveness in promoting a more coordinated United Nations country team response to national priorities has increased. However, the diversity of approaches and the uneven capacities available to support a country-level presence and action across the system continue to limit its capacity to mount integrated and comprehensive responses. With the 2005 World Summit's call upon countries to prepare and implement comprehensive national development strategies by 2006, the need to mobilize all the parts of the United Nations system that have capacities to support country development efforts has become both more urgent and more compelling.

71. With respect to instruments, the United Nations Development Assistance Framework process, in particular, is being purposefully redesigned to assist Governments in translating internationally agreed development goals, including the

Millennium Development Goals, into national policies, strategies and programmes, especially poverty reduction strategies, where they exist. Within the United Nations Development Assistance Framework process, the results matrix has provided an important instrument for United Nations system organizations to orient their programmes and operations around the development goals; to assess the effectiveness of operations; and to build national capacities to monitor and evaluate implementation, including by strengthening national statistical systems. The Resident Coordinator system has also played a central role in assisting Governments and enhancing United Nations system coordination, including through the establishment of thematic groups and the full utilization of collaborative programming frameworks, to support, at the request of Governments, the development of national strategies and action plans for integrated and coordinated conference follow-up.

72. The 2005 World Summit Outcome called for a strengthening of the linkages between the normative work of the United Nations and its operational activities. As noted above, the annual ministerial reviews and the development cooperation forums provide key forums for advancing that objective. Through the development cooperation forums, in particular, the Council, in assessing the overall responsiveness of development cooperation from all sources to the requirement of the internationally agreed development goal agenda, will have the opportunity to examine how the United Nations system has aligned its country-level operations with the internationally agreed development goals, and how its ability to provide support to countries in mainstreaming the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals, into nationally owned programmes can be further enhanced.

Recommendations

73. **The Council may wish to invite all funds, programmes and specialized agencies of the United Nations system to continue their efforts to pursue an integrated approach to conference follow-up at the country level, ensuring that common country assessments, the United Nations Development Assistance Framework, poverty reduction strategies, where they exist, and other frameworks and instruments designed to guide country-level operational activities, are geared to promote a sustained and well coordinated implementation of the internationally agreed development goal agenda.**

74. **In its consideration of the reports of the funds and programmes, the Council may wish to focus its attention on the quality and extent of their contribution to the integrated implementation of the internationally agreed development goals.**

75. **To strengthen links between the policy and the operational level in the pursuit of the internationally agreed development goals, the functional commissions which have not yet done so should explore ways to engage United Nations funds and programmes in their work more systematically. The Council could thus encourage functional commissions which have not yet done so to devote a day or half-day of their sessions to operational activities, with the active participation of the programmes and funds. Modalities should take into account the specific requirements of each commission.**

V. Division of labour between the General Assembly (Second and Third Committees), the Council and the functional commissions

76. As the highest intergovernmental policymaking mechanism, the General Assembly has a crucial role in providing overall policy guidance that can serve to strengthen and sustain commitments at the political level to the integrated implementation of the conference outcomes. Its reviews of the follow-up to the 2005 World Summit will provide a key opportunity to inject dynamism and energy into the overall implementation of the United Nations development agenda.

77. Meanwhile, the General Assembly has launched a number of practical measures to improve the division of labour between the Second and Third Committees and to better coordinate the agendas of the two Committees, taking into account potential overlapping areas in relation to the follow-up to the major United Nations conferences and summits. Joint informal debates are also being organized. For instance, in 2006, a joint event to discuss the World Bank publication entitled *World Development Report 2006: Equity and Development* was organized. To contribute to the overall effort towards greater integration and coherence, the Secretary-General has consolidated a number of reports to United Nations intergovernmental bodies, including reports such as the present one, addressed to both the Council and the General Assembly. In addition, the Secretary-General will seek to ensure that the results of the Council's consideration of such reports are specifically brought to the attention of the Assembly so that the its deliberations may build on the Council's work.

78. The new functions of the Council, mandated by the 2005 World Summit Outcome, notably its annual ministerial reviews, should enable it to provide more coherent inputs to the work of the General Assembly in its overall follow-up to and review of the Millennium Declaration.

VI. Role of partnerships

79. Over the past 15 years, there has been an unprecedented rise in the involvement of civil society and business representatives in United Nations conferences and summits. The participation of advocacy and interest groups, business and industry, research and academic institutions and other relevant stakeholders has injected dynamism into the intergovernmental process and has strengthened engagement in the implementation of conference outcomes. The innovative modalities of cooperation established for the follow-up to the World Summit on Sustainable Development and the International Conference on Financing for Development have given formal recognition to partnerships as an important complementary means of implementing conference outcomes. The experience gained in the work of the United Nations Information and Communication Technologies Task Force, launched by the Council in 2001, also provides useful guidance on building global multi-stakeholder alliances and decentralized networks, open to all relevant stakeholders, to expand the Council's reach and circle of participants in its global policy dialogue.

Recommendations

80. **The Council may wish to consider introducing innovative modalities to encourage diverse participation of civil society and the business sector, especially from developing countries, in the preparation for and follow-up to the annual ministerial reviews and development cooperation forums, including through global, regional and national decentralized networks.**

81. **The Council may consider promoting alliances along the lines of the global alliance for information and communication technologies and development with a broad range of partners in order to launch an open dialogue and sustain new partnership initiatives in key policy areas involved in the pursuit of the internationally agreed development goal agenda.**

VII. Conclusion

82. At the 2005 World Summit, world leaders committed themselves to the full and timely implementation of the internationally agreed development goals, recognizing that the Millennium Development Goals can only be achieved if pursued together with the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits. To step up implementation, Member States resolved to adopt, by 2006, comprehensive national strategies to meet the internationally agreed development goals and assigned new functions to the Economic and Social Council, notably the annual ministerial reviews and the biennial development cooperation forums.

83. The two new functions provide the Council with a new opportunity to further strengthen the integrated and coordinated follow-up to the major United Nations conferences and summits. They place the Council at the centre of the global effort to monitor and advance implementation. To fully capitalize on these new opportunities, the Council and its subsidiary bodies should use the follow-up to the 2005 World Summit to align their work with the new functions. If these changes are adopted, the Council system can make an important contribution to the achievement of the internationally agreed development goals by the 2015 target.